Interview with Clarence S. Boonstra

The Association for Diplomatic Studies and Training Foreign Affairs Oral History Project

AMBASSADOR CLARENCE S. BOONSTRA

Interviewed by: Donald Barnes

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Q: First of all I would like to thank you for your time and your courtesy in consenting to this interview, and I know that a lot of people will be very interested in sharing some of your experiences in the Foreign Service with us. I wonder if you would be good enough to start by telling us how and when you joined the service.

BOONSTRA: Thank you Mr. Barnes. Most of us never get to writing down our memories of the Foreign Service. I probably came into the Foreign Service in a different fashion than many career officers. I have a doctorate—Ph.D.—in agricultural economics at Louisiana State University and my doctorate dissertation was involved with rice production and marketing. I found myself suddenly, about 1940, an authority on rice, which is rather odd because I came from the northern states. Then I became a part-time consultant for the American Sugarcane Growers Association. Soon I was moonlighting on the side at Louisiana State University for both the Rice Association and the Sugarcane Association. When World War#II began, I was drafted three times and turned down each time because of nearsightedness and placement as a 4F. I left the university and went to work for the Department of Agriculture as an editor of agricultural publications. Shortly thereafter, when the Department of Agriculture learned of my specialization in sugar and rice, I transferred to the Commodity Credit Corporation, which at that time was taking over the responsibility

for procurement of all the Cuban sugar crop. At that time we were importing two-thirds of our sugar and supply was linked to wartime transportation availability. After some time in those jobs with Commodity Credit Corporation, there was a requirement for another agricultural specialist on these matters in Embassy Havana in Cuba. I was asked by the Foreign Service Auxiliary whether I would be interested in such employment. I already knew Cuba from a number of trips in the sugar and rice business when I was in Louisiana. Also I thought I'd be happier abroad since most of my friends were off in the Armed Forces. So I arrived in early 1943 in Cuba as Assistant Agricultural Attach# with particular responsibilities in procurement areas. I stayed there until 1945 when I was transferred to a not yet organized consulate in the Philippines, after the Japanese surrender, for similar procurement with the title of Agricultural Attach#. In 1946 I entered the Foreign Service on the basis of an oral exam and was one of the first Wristonees.

Q: You went to the Philippines just as the Japanese were leaving. The following years have been considered by some people familiar with the Foreign Service as the years in which the United States had, perhaps, it's greatest impact in foreign affairs, because it came out of the war relatively unscathed, relatively wealthy, and willing to use it's wealth and it's power. Could you talk to us a little bit about what it was like?

BOONSTRA: Well, it was a heady experience representing a country then the dominant power in the world, influencing and often controlling economic and political happenings everywhere. In Cuba we were the sole buyers of Cuban sugar and their supplies of rice and other foods depended directly on the United States. In the Philippines we were even more in control. I came there when they had military government and helped in the turnover to the civilian Filipino government. On July 4, 1946, in a spectacular celebration of independence, I was one of the aides on a platform with General MacArthur and Paul McNutt, and the incoming President Manuel Roxas. Paul McNutt had been High Commissioner and was about to become Ambassador. Subsequently, I came back to Latin America where their economies were dominated by United States post-war activities. As Agricultural Attach# in Argentina, we had a major interest in coordinating food supplies

in the post-war era for the European countries. There was great European competition for limited food supplies and Argentina was trying to take advantage of this by high prices and exploitation of European markets funded by US post-war assistance. We were both competitors and funders so Argentina had to observe our actions at all times; similarly, we were interested in observing Argentina's practices. During the Marshall Plan years while I was in Argentina, the European countries, including the British food mission there, the Dutch, the Belgian, the French, had to work closely with the American Embassy. We would try to coordinate, as best possible, their procurement of Argentine supplies.

Q: That was a time when the Perons were in power for the long stretch, as I recall. Can you tell us anything about your relationship with the government or with them as persons.

BOONSTRA: It was a very interesting relationship, particularly for me. Agricultural statistics were declared by Peron to be state secrets. There were five-year jail terms established for anyone who published or disclosed these secrets. Argentina was trying to hide the total quantities available. My particular interest was to acquire the pertinent statistics. At one point, when the Department of Agriculture in Washington published—with my name attached—my own formulation of these statistics, the local newspaper Democracia with banner headlines called for my expulsion from the country for espionage. It so happened that at the same time my wife and I were invited to a large reception at the Casa Rosada. I asked my Ambassador whether I should attend being that they had my name on the front pages for expulsion. He said, well, if they do these things, they are playing both sides so go ahead and see what happens. That evening, I climbed the Casa Rosada stairs along with my wife, we shook hands with the President and Evita Peron and stopped for a chat in the receiving line. I ventured the remark that I felt a little strange about being there because the newspaper Democracia, which is known as the government spokesman, had called for my expulsion that very morning. The President laughed and said, well you people shouldn't be so brash as to attach names to such reports. We expect this is what you do but to have your name attached as the Embassy official, that's not very nice really. We don't feel too badly about it but your government must learn not to do

things like that. I said, I'm very happily settled here in Argentina. Peron said, don't worry, the story will appear for another day or two and then you will hear nothing more about it. And that's exactly what happened.

Another aspect of interest in Argentina was a special relationship attributable to my first wife, who later died. She came from a Cuban family and was one of only two women in the embassy who spoke fluent Spanish, thus Evita seemed to feel comfortable with her. The Peron government was trying to keep its distance from the Ambassador and made it very difficult for the Ambassador to obtain appointments with the President and even with the Foreign Minister. Nevertheless, the Peron establishment, while officially somewhat hostile to the United States, understood the need for communication and cooperation and certain types of negotiations that were helpful to them, so they would choose rather strange methods of communication. Often they wouldn't see the Ambassador but Evita would get in touch with my wife and we found ourselves being the transmitter of messages. It was a strange arrangement at an embassy to go through the Agricultural Attach# but that's the way it was often done. When they wanted it done that way, that's the way we did it.

Q: That's interesting indeed, and from Argentina you went where?

BOONSTRA: From Argentina I went to Brazil. I went there as Agricultural Attach# and then took over as Acting Economic Counselor, because I left Agriculture at that time. You may recall that in 1954 the Department of Agriculture set up its own agricultural service. At that time I remained with the State Department and moved over to the economic side.

Q: After Brazil?

BOONSTRA: After Brazil I went back to Cuba. That was an interesting era also because arriving in Cuba as Economic Counselor in 1955, Arthur Gardner was Ambassador—a political appointee—and the situation was obviously growing worse very rapidly there. In December 1956, I was the Charg# at the time that Fidel Castro landed. Fidel Castro and my wife came from close-by areas in Oriente Province in Cuba. We had met Fidel

years before. Also, I had a brother-in-law who was president of the large US-owned nickel company there. None of my wife's Cuban family had pro-Castro sympathies. They were not pro-Batista. Personally, my wife and I were not pro-anybody except American interests. However, there was a good bit of agitation later done by certain congressmen in Washington and by the columnist Drew Pearson that the US had a sympathizer in the Embassy in a top position who was not pro-Batista, which was certainly true. I wasn't pro-Batista, nor was my wife's family, but certainly not pro-Castro. In any case, this agitation reached a point that I had a call from the Assistant Secretary of State, after Castro had been in Sierra Maestra mountains for about six months, saying that I should be prepared to depart very soon because of pressures against my remaining there.

Q: That's also very interesting, too. There are those apologists for Castro who say that we drove him into the arms of communism. That he originally set out to be a democratic reformer. Do you attach any credence to that?

BOONSTRA: I had some contact with Castro, although I never dealt with him personally in negotiations. You may recall, you may have been there when he came to Washington in April 1959. I believe it was to speak at Princeton University.

Q: Right.

BOONSTRA: Because I was the only person in the State Department who had apparently ever met Fidel Castro, I was included in functions and assisted with arranging things and so forth. You may have been there.

Q: No, I wasn't.

BOONSTRA: Well, State Department arranged a meeting with Vice President Nixon because President Eisenhower would not receive him. Many of Castro's first cabinet had been friends of mine, particularly Felipe Pazos and Lopez Fresquet, in positions such as Minister of Finance, Head of Central Bank, etc. They were up in Washington with him and

saw a great deal of them while they were in the United States. I was then in charge of East Coast Affairs, thus I had nothing technically to do with Cuba. I did see Castro enough to have a number of personal conversations with him. Also, of course, I had observed him during my time in Cuba during the six months after he landed in the Sierra Maestra and heard a great deal about him from his friends as well as from the opposition. My own belief is that Fidel Castro displayed a considerable amount of Marxist influence. I don't consider that he necessarily felt terribly deeply about it but his outlook on the world was clearly marked by Marxist influence as we know from his presence in Bogota and so forth. But in the limited contact that I had with him, and in the opinions of people like Felipe Pazos and Lopez Fresquet and other first members of the cabinet, it was more their feeling and it's my feeling that he looked over the world and made a conscious choice that his prospects for attaining and holding power in Cuba were better through the Soviet approach. Also, the one point which Castro made to me and which he made to Felipe Pazos and to Rufo Lopez Fresquet and others was that he would not be dissuaded from expropriation of American property. He was willing to consider partial compensation only in bonds having no real cash payoff, highly prejudicial to US investors. While Castro was in the Sierra Maestra (Felipe Pazos was with him there) Felipe sent me a long letter wanting to know just what the American views were on this. After consultation with the State Department, we replied saying that we would insist absolutely on adequate, proper, and just compensation. Later I learned that Castro then told Felipe, that's one point we can never compromise and never will. Thus, there was no way of really working closely if we couldn't get past that point. This was more important to us in those days than were the political aspects of Castro's alliance with the Soviet Union. The important thing to me from my perspective is that here was no compromise possible, either between Fidel Castro and the United States. Thus, he probably had no route to go other than to the Soviet Union. I think it was really more a practical choice than a strong sense of ideology. I don't really believe that Fidel had too much ideology other than gaining and holding power.

Q: Well he had skated around in his youth trying to find an ideology which would be a vehicle for him. I know people who went to the university with him and he used to walk around with a copy of Mein Kampf under his arm. And later he toyed with the idea of Justicialismo, the so-called Peronist doctrine which was so vague. And then left that and finally settled on this as a good vehicle to obtain and keep power.

BOONSTRA: That is the interpretation, as I say, of the people in his first cabinet and also the interpretation of my wife's family who knew Fidel as a youth. He had been hungry for power. He was an activist. He always had been an activist and he had to choose at some point. I think he explored many routes and selected the Soviet approach. If you look at events today he's probably a better communist than Gorbachev.

Q: Yes, and he apparently was not moved by Gorbachev's pleas to change direction and approach.

BOONSTRA: On the other hand, if the United States had ever chosen a different policy toward Cuba, then Fidel, in spite of all of his firm, strong positions in communism, might have found it to his advantage to move into a closer position with the United States.

Q: Well, he gives the impression now of total inflexibility in his statements.

BOONSTRA: I think it's obvious to him at his present age that he couldn't make the switch any longer. He'd go down if he made the switch.

Q: The next post for you after Havana was?

BOONSTRA: Well, then I went up to Washington and went to the National War College. Oh, I forgot to say that when I had to be moved out—the State Department said they had to move me very abruptly because of press notices concerning Cuba. The only place they could put me right away quick was at the National War College so I became a student there. Then I became, briefly, the Deputy Director and then the Director of South American

Affairs. Then that office was split and I spent a couple of years as Director of East Coast Affairs for South America. Dick Rubottom was the Assistant Secretary at that time. I met you at that time.

Q: That's right, yes.

BOONSTRA: In 1960 my wife fell ill with leukemia, and after her death I wanted to go off on some other type of assignment. I became the Political Adviser to what was then the Caribbean Command and is now the Southern Command. I might mention during that period also, Castro had jailed my father-in-law and when my wife fell ill she wanted to see her parents because she would not recover. So I appealed to Phil Bonsal, and Phil Bonsal appealed to Raul Roa, the Foreign Minister, to release her parents.

Q: Bonsal was our Ambassador in Cuba?

BOONSTRA: Yes. He had replaced a politically-appointed Ambassador in a last ditch effort to try to get a professional point of view on this. He appealed to Raul Roa, whom I had known well in Cuba, who was then Castro's Foreign Minister. His son is now Castro's Foreign Minister. And Raul got in touch with me and said he'd see to it that her parents were permitted to leave Cuba. So they did come to the United States with one bag apiece. At least it was a decent gesture on Cuba's part. The years in Washington were interesting, but I've always preferred service abroad.

Q: Very good. Then after your service in Panama, you moved where?

BOONSTRA: First I should mention one little note of, I think, some interest historically which is not mentioned anywhere in literature which I've seen. After President Kennedy took office, the idea of the Alliance for Progress was being broached. It was of interest to the President to know the views of the other presidents so he sent two of his special assistants, George McGovern, Special Assistant for Food and Arthur Schlesinger, Political Assistant, with me as an escort officer to visit the presidents of South America, which we

did in about February 1961 right after the inauguration. We made a tour of all of these countries.

Q: I've never heard of that. That's interesting.

BOONSTRA: Our particular mission was to hold conversations with the presidents of these countries. We did this with [Arturo] Frondizi in Argentina and with, you know the strange man Janio Quadros in Brasilia and with Romulo Betancourt in Venezuela. Our report was made by Arthur Schlesinger and George McGovern directly to the President. All of these presidents did express an interest in the proposed Alliance for Progress, and they all expressed their views as to what structure the product should be. In March—the subsequent month—the Kennedy Administration began putting this together. After that escort tour, I was made Political Adviser to Southern Command. I was the first Political Adviser there with General O'Meara, Andy O'Meara, who was a real disciplinarian but very much interested and a capable man. I think I can make some claim for having assisted him in a major revision of our military posture in Latin America. Up to that time we had been disposing, through our Military Assistance Act after World War II, of surplus arms and supported by training missions and military missions. We had expanded our military missions to almost all of the Latin America countries. They were still basically teaching the role of continental defense for each of these countries, when in reality as your know, the armed forces of these countries were spending most of their time on internal matters.

Q: That's right, yes.

BOONSTRA: I did a great deal of work on this for the Defense Department and for the Commander of the Caribbean Command whose perspective was very similar to mine. We were spending most of our money on anti-submarine warfare (ASW). After we examined the military potential of each of these countries, visiting each of these countries and visiting many of their navy, air and ground units and seeing this vast amount of money being spent on anti-submarine warfare and on continental defense with heavy artillery

and heavy weapons and then looking at the realities of the world, particularly with the existence of nuclear weapons, that we were not facing the real problems. We brought this up to Washington and I was made head of a special assessment team. In the wake of the Bay of Pigs disaster, President Kennedy was very much interested in the coordination of intelligence and the adequacy of our military preparation in Latin America and why such a mistake was possible. The team was called the South American Assessment Team— a group of which you've probably never heard. This was highly classified at the time but I don't think it's classified any longer. I was in charge of representing the State Department and the Southern Command. The team was made up of two officers each from the Air Force, Army, Navy, CIA and FBI. The FBI tried to play a very strong hand on the assessment, particularly the adequacies of CIA intelligence. We visited each of the ten South American countries. We had a separate team, in which I did not involve myself, in Central America. The product was a paper which called for the Southern Command to change its pattern of operations, dropping the stress on anti-submarine warfare and continental defense. This made me sort of persona non grata with the Navy for a long time, although later they accepted it. Usually the ASW weapons systems simply didn't work at all, even on exercises. And there was an obvious need to coordinate military policy with development needs. A principal concept in the Alliance for Progress was that if you built economic strength you'd get political stability. I urged—and this got me dismissed from the working group on the Alliance for Progress—that when you built up their economies that you'd probably get more political instability. When old peasant systems—slaves and masters—break up, you have a greater independence and a greater ability to disrupt existing political systems, particularly with the existence of unions, so you had to expect more political instability. Temporarily, at least, this might produce some very bad leaders. Thus, the role of the armed forces should be geared more toward better and more intelligent internal defense protecting the emerging democracies including a reserve capacity to back up their ineffective police forces. We recommended also that AID provide assistance in the police field and public security. That became a problem later when AID established such programs.

Q: Yes, yes.

BOONSTRA: Therefore, our military assistance program changed its focus considerably toward building up and improving internal capacity and particularly trying to shift toward more humanitarian methods in riot control and police work instead of the traditional tough-guy approach. I don't think we were very successful, but I think the idea was good and I think the proof of it is that the role of the Southern Command ever since has concentrated on role of the Latin American armed forces internally rather than on continental defense.

Q: For those who may read or listen to this, perhaps a word of explanation about the role of the FBI. They had been responsible for intelligence in Latin America during World War II. Isn't that true? And they always kept a vestigial longing to go back to those days, I think.

BOONSTRA: They had a very, very strong interest in Latin America. When I first arrived in Cuba in 1943, one of our largest embassy sections was the Legal Attach# Office, the FBI intelligence branch. A number of these people became very good friends of mine. We were all similar ages. At that time I wasn't married, nor were they. We formed friendships which I still have. Until 1947, the FBI had Latin America to itself in this kind of intelligence collection. When CIA was founded, they waged a tremendous fight to maintain their establishment. FBI succeeded in maintaining a very limited capacity, only for police liaison and not overall intelligence functions. In general they did pretty well obey that directive. Legal attach#s in Peru, Argentina, and Brazil during my times in those countries stayed pretty much within their designated areas of responsibility. However, FBI did maintain a larger independent capability in Mexico about which I learned when I came there as DCM in the 1960s. Their intelligence activities became a matter of dispute between the then Ambassador to Mexico and the Director of the FBI.

Q: Was that Tommy Mann?

BOONSTRA: No that was Tony Freeman.

Q: Oh yes, Tony.

BOONSTRA: The upshot of it was that FBI would no longer maintain their absolutely separate intelligence operations and communication capabilities in Mexico. There would be consultation and communication with the Ambassador, as the CIA ordinarily does, although not always, as you know. The FBI in Mexico previously had refused to provide any of their communications to the Ambassador or to me as Deputy Chief of Mission. There was a major confrontation and for once the FBI lost but they did continue a large establishment there and they still have it. Of course, there is a great deal of police work going on there.

Q: As a very minor and personal footnote, my seemingly very eccentric English teacher in high school during the war in Argentina was later revealed to have been in the FBI an equivalent of the Station Chief and was highly decorated. He was so eccentric that he could get away with anything because everybody thought he was really off his rocker. But anyhow, that's a minor point.Then you were transferred to Mexico?

BOONSTRA: Yes, as Deputy Chief of Mission. This was after my tour as Political Adviser in the Southern Command, with Tom Mann as Ambassador when I arrived. Tom Mann was particularly active getting a solution to the Chamizal problem. He left soon after I arrived. When President Johnson took office after President Kennedy's assassination he called Tom back to Washington almost immediately and later on Tom became Assistant Secretary of State. So I had about a half year as Charg# d'Affaires there and I finished up the Chamizal Treaty. I signed the treaty which I think was a notable accomplishment. Tom did an excellent job at figuring out the intricacies and making a tradeoff there since we couldn't really restore the lands that Mexico had claimed.

Q: Perhaps to our listeners and readers, you might say a word of what the Chamizal meant.

BOONSTRA: Chamizal is very important to Mexicans, although most of the United States never heard of it. In 1863, or thereabouts, the Rio Grande River broke out of its banks south of El Paso and cut an oxbow piece of Mexico off. Under international law the cutoff territory still belonged to Mexico, about 500 acres. Mexico demanded it but the Texans, in the independent Texas, took it over as part of Texas. Subsequently, El Paso's downtown area began to grow over some of it. The US refusal to negotiate was a principal reason why Mexico, during almost 100 years, would not settle many issues with the United States. In 1911, Mexico went to the World Court and the World Court ruled in Mexico's favor. The United States still would not return it. The Mexicans subsequently related just about everything we did with them to our refusal to return territory the World Court had adjudicated to them and which under normal international law was theirs. It was just a tiny bit of territory really of little importance but of great symbolic importance. This went on until the famous trip of President Kennedy to Mexico City, where he was much cheered by the people, you may have been there.

Q: I was there.

BOONSTRA: Kennedy made it a commitment that we would settle the Chamizal, provided that the Mexicans would negotiate about how it would be settled and not just state rigidly this is it. Tom Mann, who is a lawyer and a Texan, as Ambassador had principal responsibility to negotiate a solution. The Mexicans designated Ambassador Vicente Sanchez Gavito, a former thorn in our side at the Organization of American States, but who became one of my best friends in Mexico. They negotiated a tradeoff. We couldn't return downtown El Paso, the Texans just wouldn't tolerate that. Governor Connally said he would be willing to work with the Kennedy Administration on a solution to the problem. LBJ, as Vice President, and subsequently President, gave full support. So, the pivotal organization was in line and there was a negotiating opportunity. Since we couldn't return El Paso, we sort of cut the disputed area in two and gave the Mexicans about half the original and the other half down the river nearby. And then we agreed to dig a

whole new river channel on the new border. This cost $30 million, including new bridges across the new channel. A rather clumsy arrangement, but both sides could live with it. When Tom left to go to Washington, I was left with the clean-up and the finishing of that arrangement along with [Director of Mexican Affairs] Bob Sayre in Washington. Then Tony Freeman arrived as Ambassador and later President Johnson made repeated trips down to Mexico celebrating the agreement. After this, Tony and I put together a list of, I think, 32 unresolved claims that we had against Mexico and we scheduled them for negotiation at the rate of ten a year. We were able to settle rapidly most of these claims, including the famous Pious claim by California. The Mexicans, who had held out on the Pious claim since the Mexican war, paid off the adjudicated amount. The Chamizal settlement was one of our great accomplishments in Mexico.

Q: I have a medal from the ceremony in Mexico and it said, I think very nice worded, "revolutionary justice among sister peoples".

BOONSTRA: Correct, I have that medal also.

Q: Then you left Mexico and you went where?

BOONSTRA: Then I went as Ambassador to Costa Rica.

Q: And what year was that?

BOONSTRA: That was in the first of 1967. I had remarried in 1966 and Margaret had been the Special Assistant to Linc Gordon when he was Assistant Secretary of State, so she was well aware of all that was going on. We were married in 1966. Then in early 1967, when Linc Gordon was Assistant Secretary of State, I was sent to Costa Rica as Ambassador.

Q: Who was President of Costa Rica at that time?

BOONSTRA: Joaquin Trejos Fernandez, from the conservative party, one of the best presidents Costa Rica has had. They've had many good presidents, as you know. Trejos was not really conservative in any extreme sense, not a wealthy man, a well-educated man desiring to govern well.

Q: A scholarly man.

BOONSTRA: He had been in the book publishing business, and he was not a slap on the back politician. I partly went there because our main problems were economic. Costa Rica had fallen previously into one of its periodic overprintings of currency and fiscal mismanagement under the previous president Francisco “Chico” Orlich. Trejos took over at a time when the value of its currency was falling and they were much concerned. The fall had been about 30%, which in today's world isn't so alarming. But in those days it was alarming. We worked very well together and had very easy communication. I had a great respect for President Trejos.

Q: And you were Ambassador there when he made his official visit to the United States?

BOONSTRA: Yes, which turned out, of course, to be a very difficult time because during the night after the State dinner Robert Kennedy was assassinated. We discussed it the next morning and we all agreed we should terminate the visit immediately.

Q: He had one more appointment with Robert McNamara, then President of the World Bank, who insisted, trying to overcome his tears and his emotions, on going through with the meeting. It was a very, very difficult meeting for that reason. I was there. It was very painful because he was a close friend of Senator Kennedy's and he just couldn't control his emotions. And Trejos offered to cut it short, and he said no, this is a duty.

BOONSTRA: I think Trejos was one of the more successful presidents and I have never been at an embassy where we worked as closely with the Presidencia of a country. Of course it's a small country and everything has to go to the presidency there. I had

working at the embassy an excellent economist. I think one of the finest, if not the finest, I have seen in the Foreign Service, John Bushnell. Although John was a Class V officer, when I found his quality, I placed him in charge of our economic efforts. We didn't actually put much money in it because I had learned before that money does not solve mismanagement problems. The willingness of Costa Rica to tackle its problems and to carry out a program, execute a program, is what solved the problems. We were able to assist the necessary economic reforms and the stabilization of the economy in Costa Rica, mainly by standbys, Treasury standbys and standbys from the World Bank, the International Monetary Fund, of which very little was ever drawn. But, it had to be there in order to get bank credits. We were able to cooperate in a stabilization program which I think was one of the most successful ones.

Q: Did not solve it, no. But the judicious use of the standbys is, unfortunately, not that prevalent because it really should be there as a guarantee for loans and not to be used up.

BOONSTRA: We made that perfectly clear. Of course, it does cost the country a bit in the standby fee. But the Trejos regime, I think, was very, very successful. It was followed later by a Liberacion President. There was not really that much difference. Both parties tend toward middle class values in their approaches.

Q: Were there any other issues of importance which came up during your tenure as Ambassador in San Jose?

BOONSTRA: There are a couple of other things of which I'm proud. One of the interesting sidelights is building a road from San Jose to Limon. You are probably aware of that. When I came to Costa Rica one of the really big drawbacks to the development of the country was that there was no road to that port city of Limon, only a decrepit old railroad which was really on its last days. Trejos was very desirous that a road be built. But in checking around the community, and the power infrastructure there, I found that many people did not want a road to Limon. Limon is essentially a black community and a poor

community and quite populous with a very rapid population growth rate. In the San Jose region, the high plateau, the main part of Costa Rica, is basically white and relatively prosperous and they had always insulated themselves from the Caribbean influence. Once a road was there, there would be no barrier any longer. The train could only carry a limited number of passengers and could control the movement of people. They also stated concern over possible infiltration of communists from Cuba and without a road they'd have a better control—airports and trains provide better control. Trejos and those who were interested in economic development wanted the road—felt it had to be built. Oddly, the World Bank, Interamerican Development Bank and AID all had refused them assistance for this road. The reasons for their refusal I never could quite determine.

Q: Strange.

BOONSTRA: Before I arrived there, AID had sent in a great deal of heavy machinery to build a dike around Cartago because of the eruption of Irazu, which had sent a river of mud down that was going to engulf Cartago. We sent in the SeaBees [US Navy Construction Battalions] using this equipment, earth movers, this sort of thing. Afterwards, the equipment was stored in Cartago as AID surplus. In conversation one time with President Trejos— Trejos actually brought it up—he said, you know I think there's a way we can get that road built and force financing of the road which is necessary to economic development. If we built a dirt road linking together some of the old banana transport routes, the financing agencies and other groups would see the need for a good paved road. We have the AID machinery with which we could do it and we think in six months we could build this dirt road from Turrialba down to Limon, just the part that is now missing. But he said we need permission to use this AID machinery because the contract with AID says we cannot use it. It has been offered on the world surplus market and we have to pay the cost of storing it meanwhile, but we can't use it. He said, this is absurd and I said, yes, I think it's absurd too. So he said, well, we ought to do something about it. I talked to our AID Director who confirmed that this machinery cannot be used. It had already been separated from the AID mission and transferred to the surplus disposal people. So I said,

we'll take it up with Washington. Sound them out. And Washington came back and said, it can't be used, there is no way AID can free it. It can't be done. I went to Washington on some other business and I checked this out with AID and they said, no it can't be used. The contract also provided, in order to avoid any charge of corruption, it could not be sold in Costa Rica. It had to be sold elsewhere on bids. They didn't have any bids. But on the way back it occurred to me that they just said no, the bureaucratic tangle doesn't permit it. When I returned and was talking this over with President Trejos, I said, you know you people have custody of this machinery. You may have problems in your warehouse and maybe you ought to move some of the machinery out to see if it's running. And he said, would people send reports that we're doing something that we're not supposed to do? I said, we're not taking care of that machinery, you are. It's in the warehouse there. He said, let me check this out. So, he calls me up and says that it's in running condition but it would be good to take it out and see how it runs and what not. We think we can do this dirt road in six months. I said, I don't think we'd all get disturbed by that. They went ahead and used this machinery and built the dirt road to Limon and put the machinery back and nothing ever happened. I never received a reprimand, nor did AID, nor did the Costa Ricans. The next year the machinery was sold abroad. That next year the Interamerican Bank and the World Bank decided that after all they could finance a road to Limon because they had the dirt road there in place. So, I'm very proud of that little around the edges operation.

Q: I think that's a very heartwarming story and it had a happy ending and I think you're to be commended for having taken some risks and having this done.

BOONSTRA: Another major accomplishment during the time I was there was assistance to a Financiera (private financing agency) called COFISA which at that time was a principal driving force behind economic development both agriculturally and industrially in Costa Rica. It's one of several financing organizations started by AID originally which was successful and, subsequently, it has been a model for many other countries. At that particular time, because of exchange difficulties and monetary problems, it was on the edge of being lost. The president of it at that time was a fellow by the name of Jack

Harris. Jack was somewhat questionable politically in the United States because he had been with the United Nations during the [Senator Joseph] McCarthy regime—he was an anthropologist. And he, for matter of principle—not because he had Marxist views—refused to answer questions about whether he was a communist or not. He exiled himself to Costa Rica after discharge out there from the United Nations, began to drive a taxi and established a taxi company, and subsequently became the big industrialist of Costa Rica. He was the president of Financiera COFISA. My predecessor and all predecessors had been restrained in their relations with him because of the McCarthy days. I threw all that to the winds and he became a good friend. I was able to push through additional financial support for COFISA and helped to reestablish that organization which today is still a principal driving force in economic development in Costa Rica. I'm very pleased with that.

Q: Well good.

BOONSTRA: Now the thing that wasn't so good which caused me a great deal of trouble relates to the Nelson Rockefeller mission later and also relates to the fact that I didn't last too much longer as Ambassador. You are acquainted with the American Institute for Free Labor Development (AIFLD). AIFLD had to operate under wraps in a lot of countries, but in Costa Rica they had a pretty free hand. They were running a sort of vendetta against United Fruit there, on the Pacific coast where the banana plantations were declining and were being substituted by palm oil. The future of the banana industry was on the east coast out of Limon where it is now established. In fact, it has just about disappeared on the Pacific coast. Although the United Fruit workers were among the best paid and best housed in Costa Rica, the organizing drive was causing continuous strikes and troubles and there was constant pressure and difficulty. To me the pursuing of United Fruit by AIFLD was not our business in Costa Rica. It was more a political deal by Washington to hold its union political support. Well, at that time Standard Fruit [Company] and a couple of other American interests were putting plantations on the east coast which had been discarded by United Fruit. Also, a lot of independent Costa Ricans were doing this in

small plots. Standard Fruit and a couple of other large growers were anxious to have AIFLD because they had Cuban organizations in there had a communist influence. I was able to get [AIFLD Director] Bill Doherty to de-emphasize the work at United Fruit and put AIFLD where it should be, combating Marxist communist influence and so forth, on the east coast. And they did move people in there in my last year and worked, I think, in a reasonably productive manner. This, however, made the small banana growers and some of the Costa Ricans very unhappy because they certainly didn't want unions at all of any kind. I knew of this counter-current and didn't realize how I would be affected by it. It wasn't causing any particular current problems. But after President Nixon was elected the conservative element emerged more strongly on these issues. They claimed that AIFLD was sponsoring communist unions which, of course, was just the reverse. To them all unions were communist. And there was a little bad press on that. When the Nixon Administration came in they didn't dare dump the AIFLD program which still continues today, Republican or what. That's a political trade-off with the unions. I began to hear notices that a woman called Ruth Farkas had purchased my job in the auction in Washington. She later said she paid $300,000 for it, and was Costa Rica really worth that? She never came on the job, by the way, because it became public notice in Washington that she had paid for it and there was a ruckus about it. So after a year of keeping it quiet they sent her to Luxembourg. Anyway, I had heard rumors that I was about to be changed, which was to be expected. Then came the Nelson Rockefeller mission. One of the requirements of the mission was that they have a meeting with private businessmen in Costa Rica. It was the last thing on the schedule on the one day he spent there. This meeting arranged by the advance people was heavily stacked with the big Costa Rican land owners. The Ambassador wasn't asked to attend, that didn't bother me although it did bother President Trejos. The big land owners, particularly those with interests on the east coast, presented a letter to Nelson Rockefeller advising him of the dangerous leftist tendencies of the Ambassador and their concern over this. They claimed that I had taken AIFLD off the Pacific coast (where it was harassing US interests) and put it to work on the east coast where it was hurting Costa Ricans. This letter was handed to

Nelson Rockefeller who handed it to a gentleman named James Cannon. And from what I heard, subsequently, at the termination of the trip there was a review of the Ambassadors. James Cannon handled the review and used the letter as a citation that I was a man not acceptable to the Nixon Administration. I was promptly released from my position. Oddly, I was promoted to Career Minister at precisely the same time, but this didn't seem to help.

Q: That's terrible, terrible.

BOONSTRA: They ended up with a new Ambassador I had known previously, Ploeser, I forget his first name, Ploeser from Missouri.

Q: Shoe manufacturer.

BOONSTRA: When I was the Director of East Coast Affairs he had been Ambassador to Paraguay where he got along well with the dictator. Paraguay was very quiet and of little importance to us. Ploeser liked diplomacy and he was able to obtain politically the position of Ambassador in Costa Rica. There a disaster took place, caused in part by another man, a CIA station chief named Earl Richardson. Earl had worked with me in Cuba years before. When he was proposed as station chief I had objected unless Richardson would work under my orders and would not do what he was noted for, disrupting things with unnecessary covert action, monkey business. He would have to work as a member of the embassy team. On that basis I accepted him. Well, when Ploeser came there President Jose Don Pepe Figueres had become president. For some time Costa Rica had been planning to permit the Soviet Union to establish an embassy. They wanted to restore normal relationship. That was what Costa Rica stood for, a democracy and openness to everybody. Trejos had explained it to me and I couldn't find a problem with it but it was the US and CIA policy to block it in every way possible.

Q: It's a very paternalistic and defensive policy—we can have relations with the Soviets but you can't.

BOONSTRA: That's right and so I had to do everything I could to block it, which I did successfully in part because Trejos is a nice fellow. Don Pepe told me, however, that when he got to be President—this was before I left there—they definitely were going to establish relations with the Soviet Union. Well my successor, Ploeser, and Earl Richardson saw in all of this a great communist scheme establishing Costa Rica as a central point for subversion in the hemisphere. And they began all types of actions carrying on a crusade which only, of course, would make sure that Figueres would do it and he did it. Upon which there was a great communist scare there and Don Pepe finally ended up by saying that we don't want any communists but we don't want the United States controlling us either. They didn't want all this paternalism. And he said, portions of the American fleet are standing offshore threatening us with military invasion. This went on and finally the Costa Rican government made it pretty clear that Ploeser and Richardson were persona non grata and both informally were removed. Shortly after they were removed in 1972, which was about three years after I left there, I and my family returned for a visit to Costa Rica and we were received not only by our old friend Trejos but also by Don Pepe Figueres who was then President. I said, Don Pepe, I understand your feelings, I've always known your feelings about pressure that you resent from the United States, even your conservative predecessor resented it. But why did you say absurd silly things like we have portions of our fleet standing off Costa Rica to try and force things on you? That's absurd. He said, why of course that's absurd. But when you do absurd things, your ambassador says absurd things like this, I'm going to say absurd things about him.

Q: That's Figueres, yes.

BOONSTRA: But, he said, it did the job didn't it? It pulled it out in the open and we got rid of Ambassador Ploeser and of Mr. Richardson. Mr.#Richardson settled down there, he still lives there.

Q: That's something. Well, were there any other assignments in the Foreign Service when you left Costa Rica?

BOONSTRA: Yes, I then went off as Diplomat-in-Residence at the University of Colorado where I spent a rather pleasant year—not very productive. In April of that year State had a problem in Brazil because Burke Elbrick, who that preceding Fall had been kidnaped, not as a result of the kidnaping or of the slight blow he did receive during that, but because of a basic blood disorder he could not return to Brazil. He had to stay in the United States for medical attention. At the same time there was friction between the United States and Brazil about the whole kidnaping episode. Someone had made the decision in the State Department and the White House that we would not recall or cut short the term of our Ambassador there while this unpleasantness existed. The DCM there was about to retire because of the 60 year age limit. They needed someone to be the Charg# there and I cut short my assignment as Diplomat-in-Residence—I did speak some Portuguese and was familiar with Brazil from previous service there—to go to Brazil as the Charg#. And I, seeing this as an opportunity to be possibly reinstated in the Chief of Mission area, happily accepted. I had eight months of being Charg# there. The Foreign Minister was an old friend of mine and our relations were quickly corrected. We got along great really. The Medici government was military but pretty decent people. When I arrived in Rio I found very elaborate plans made by the former Ambassador Elbrick to gradually transfer the Embassy to Brasilia and the Ambassador would be the last to be transferred. The first thing that the Foreign Affairs Minister put pressure on me was that if the American Embassy was moved to Brasilia they could get other diplomatic missions to move. So far they wouldn't make the move because nobody lived up there. And, he said, also you're subject to terrorism in Rio. I had a lead car and follow car and an armored car and had seven armed men around me at all times. He said, it would be a lot more comfortable for you up here in Brasilia. So, I took it upon myself to reverse the whole plan. We would first move the Chief of Mission and then move the Embassy staff little by little. After all, the Chief of Mission and foreign office is where you do your really influential work. To me,

logically the Ambassador or Charg# should be the first element to move. Already I had planned my arrival in Brazil first in Brasilia. Later, I gave our Fourth of July reception there and I announced at that reception that the seat of the mission was Brasilia. The State Department had come along, thank goodness. [Director of Brazilian Affairs] Bob Dean had served in Brasilia and that helped a lot. He knew Brazil. We improvised a little apartment there for Margaret and me to live in during visits and we spent quite a bit of time there. But, I had to run the Embassy in Rio where all the people were too. Bill Rountree, who was being eased out of South Africa for a political appointee, subsequently was named Ambassador to Brazil. Now Bill had never set foot in Latin America before and it was not his first choice of a job I'm sure. He was named and announced as Ambassador to Brazil and I was called to Washington to consult with him. He kept on asking me all these questions about the Embassy residence and life in Rio and finally I realized he thought he was going to Rio. No one had told him that the Embassy, the seat of the Mission, had been moved to Brasilia which, when his wife found out, caused some upset. But, they adjusted to it and they improved the apartment still further in Brasilia and they used somewhat the residence in Rio until later we sold it.

Q: That's something. That's incredible.

BOONSTRA: By about 1972 we had moved most of the Embassy people to Brasilia, we had found and rented office space, and were building a new building. We then made a Consulate General out of the Mission in Rio. I stayed on to retirement in 1974.

Q: Perhaps, Mr. Ambassador, you might tell us a little bit about what you've been doing since you left the Foreign Service, which you left after Brazil, right?

BOONSTRA: Yes, I was one of the fortunate Foreign Service Officers. Having an economic background in developing countries was an excellent entry into other occupations. I was offered a position with InterAmerican Development Bank which I declined in favor of going to work as an adviser in international affairs to Weyerhaeuser

Company of Seattle, Washington. I could be resident anywhere I wanted because my work would be overseas and they were very liberal with their travel policy so we settled down in Gainesville, Florida. I like the climate and the library there and a few other friends, including Ambassador Rountree, live there. Weyerhaeuser Company had been looking at possibilities for production of paper and timber from planted forests in South America, as well as in Southeast Asia, and I had met them in Rio at a briefing in the Consulate General. Since I am an agricultural economist by training, I suppose I was able to brief in the proper terms. Shortly after I retired they were trying to get in touch with me and finally ran me down in Washington and said that they were looking for someone to represent them in this type of work abroad and did I know of anyone who might be interested in such work. I said, well first and foremost I would like you to consider my application for such work. I've retired now. Oh, you are, well come on out to Seattle. Subsequently, I was employed to handle Latin America and some of the European work and Frank Galbraith, who had previously been Ambassador in Indonesia, was employed to handle their problems in the Philippines and Indonesia. So, I spent ten years from roughly 1974 to 1984 as a special consultant in international matters for Weyerhaeuser Company. I spent a great deal of time in Brazil, Chile and Central America. This included all aspects, exploring investment opportunities and risks, introducing government officials, examining legislation, working with banks and on legal problems, especially in the tropical rain forests of the Amazon region. I also served on Weyerhaeuser consulting teams on subject projects as Daniel K. Ludwig's Jari operation which is the largest effort of that kind in the rain forests that's ever been attempted—rather unsuccessfully.

Q: Outlining what you've been doing in these last years brings up two topics of very current interest.

BOONSTRA: From 1984 to the present date, finishing this year, I have worked for consulting companies on short-term assignments and this has taken me into Southeast Asia as well. I just completed assignments in Thailand and Sri Lanka.

Q: Well, very good. As I was saying, this brings up two very current subjects. One is the Amazon rain forests and its future that is now of interest to the whole world and Central America which is certainly of interest to us in the United States, and I wonder if you have any comments on either one or both of these subjects?

BOONSTRA: The rain forest is a popular subject now and of the various talks I give the subject most in demand is the tropical rain forest. I've had the opportunity to explore the area and see the destruction which is taking place at a rate of about 2% a year in Brazil. It looks rather small but when you add up, at a rate which tends to accelerate, even 2% over 25 years means half of it's gone. People have blamed all sorts of things. One of my concern for Weyerhaeuser was to destroy the myth that the great international corporations, the multinational groups, greedy companies destroy this. This is absolutely not true. To the contrary, Weyerhaeuser interests were all in types of forestry and extraction of tropical timber which would preserve a forest cover, although it might change the species in the planted forest.

Q: Weyerhaeuser has a very good track record in this regard.

BOONSTRA: They call themselves a tree planting company and it's the only one of the large forest products company that at the present time owns enough forest and continues to plant everything as soon as it is cut and is self-sufficient. They do not depend on timber from the National Forest or anything else. They contribute, they add trees to the world. And it was our plan to do the same in any area in which we operate. But the tropical rain forest is, in fact, being destroyed rapidly. Now why is it being destroyed? Basically it was a decision that was made—I think one of the worst decisions the Medici Government ever made—largely from military influence to secure frontiers. This decision was made in 1969 and in 1970 when they decided to construct the highways across the Amazon. People today seem to think that the environmentalists didn't understand what was going on. In fact, I myself had a number of conversations with the Planning Minister—his name at that time was Veloso—about this problem and with the forestry authorities and with

some of the political people, including even the Foreign Minister. This decision was terrible because once you put a road through, settlers go in and follow it and destroy the forest. I wasn't arguing so much then on the environment as the fact that the resource that Brazil has in the tropical rain forest, if properly used, is an asset forever. But improperly used, you are going to destroy an area and will have another wasteland like in Minas Gerais [State] and in northeast Brazil, where the cover has been destroyed and the soil has been destroyed and there is nothing left. Therefore, building these roads was a very grave matter but we couldn't convince them. Roberto Campos, for example, demonstrated very clearly that the same amount of money they were investing in Amazon roads, if invested in the southern and central Brazil would yield vastly greater economic benefits. But they stubbornly went and built these roads. This was a macro-economic decision and since then, once that decision was made, the proper solutions were blocked. We then suggested that if you can spend all of this money you probably don't need all of the existing AID assistance. We were providing at that time about $800 million a year in economic assistance. These were the miracle years in Brazil and things were going well. There had been powerful interests that were keeping economic assistance going. When Bill Rountree came there we were able to use the road-building decision to cut off and terminate the AID program.

Q: Yes. Well then let's go to Central America. What do you see when you look at Central America now?

BOONSTRA: I've made quite a number of visits back there, including one as a member of a Presidential committee in Honduras trying to improve the economy of that country in 1984, and I have been a consultant on economic matters in El Salvador. I've been in El Salvador four times, I believe, short-term consultancies, as well as Honduras and I've kept very close to the situation. In 1979, I happened to be in Central America at the time the decision by the Carter Administration that Somoza would be forced to go. Weyerhaeuser then had box plants in El Salvador and Guatemala and I immediately advised that with Somoza gone there was sure to be a very disturbed political situation throughout Central

America. We quickly disposed of those properties (I got a great deal of credit for good advice) at a profit. It was clear that trouble was ahead. I don't think communist influence was or is very strong in either El Salvador or any of these countries, but obviously there were organizers and agents. You had to expect this from the Soviet Union and you had to expect it from Cuba. I think they would almost have been negligent to forego their own interest. They were obviously there and they were stirring it up, but there was a strongly indigenous character to these troubles in these countries for which there was no easy solution. The effort made, for example in El Salvador, to carry out a broad-scale land reform has been in trouble since it started. Chaotic periods simply had to be expected. Honduras, a much more placid nation where there are very few rich or big land holders and nobody has much of anything, experienced less difficulty, but has not been able to establish really a sound order. They have been able to change presidents, an evidence of democracy. In Nicaragua, I think a few people have seized control of the movement who are hostile to the United States. I don't know how good communists they are but they are hostile to the United States which is probably worse than communists. You know there is evidence today that we can be friendly with communists but not those who are hostile to us. Nicaragua fell into hostile hands. I had been studying investments in Costa Rica which we did not carry out because we were afraid that the disturbance would reach there also. Fortunately, it hasn't. Now what the solution is really, and this is a thing which everybody has got to wrestle with, I think United States' pressures have tended to be counterproductive. I think in these countries, we have to have the patience to let them find their own way. It's going to hurt because people are being killed. They can't find their own way very clearly. Political leadership has to emerge. The old political leadership, which was strictly rightist and had little respect for anybody else, has to go at some point. The new leadership has to rise from within the country. There are powerful forces in Cuba and the Soviet Union. We have to do something to curtail them. I think the only answer is that the Soviet Union and Cuba and we and everybody else reasonably keep their hands off until Central America sorts out their problems and some new leadership and political

structure emerges which now isn't there. When we try to put it there for them, we see what happens in El Salvador today. And supporting the Contras has likewise been a failure.

Q: Tragic.

BOONSTRA: I just don't think we can solve their problems. We could alleviate it with an Army occupation temporarily, but even that in today's world wouldn't hold for long. We'd have another Vietnam before we're through.

Q: Okay, Mr. Ambassador, we've got a couple of points here that we did not include in the main portion and would like to have them added and I think one had to do with the military in Costa Rica.

BOONSTRA: As you recall, I mentioned I had been Political Adviser with the Southern Command—at that time the Caribbean Command—and it seemed to me an anomaly while I was there that we had a rather large military mission in Costa Rica, which conflicted with the increasing recognition by the world and by the local political structure and by the people that one of Costa Rica's real achievements was the disbandment of a professionally officered army and establishment instead of a type of paramilitary capacity in the police forces. Also it appeared to me that we could service the paramilitary necessities both in training, and assistance in procuring necessary light equipment, just as well by temporary and short-term training and by sending short-term advisers, when requested by the Costa Rican Government. So I began a movement to remove the military mission in Costa Rica which fortunately, because of my previous attachment to the military command in the Panama Canal Zone, was somewhat better received them had been the case in previous moves of this sort. There is a bureaucratic tendency to maintain indefinitely a military mission once established. We did terminate it.

Q: And the other question had to do with going further back in your earlier career with the Philippines and the Hakbalahaps.

BOONSTRA: At that time I was a fairly young officer assigned as Agricultural Attach# there. We had only a handful of four or five people in the newly-formed embassy after the declaration of Philippine independence on July 4, 1946. I had been working closely with a man named Wolf Ladejinsky who was the Agricultural Attach# assigned with General MacArthur in Japan, where General MacArthur enforced very widespread reforms of the agricultural system which changed considerably the character of Japanese agriculture and land holding. As history as shown, it was one of the major accomplishments of MacArthur's administration during his time in Japan. In the Philippines the rice plain of Luzon was largely, before the war, in sugarcane. It is not a good sugarcane producing region. Most of the mills there were involved heavily with United States interests. These mills had been largely destroyed during World War II by the Japanese. The peasant class had largely taken over these lands and were producing rice and the character of the land use was changing. The US War Damages Act was then passed to compensate the Philippines and reconstruct the Philippines. A great deal of that money, perhaps most of it, went into rebuilding the sugar industry and the American partially-owned or wholly-owned mills in Luzon or, if they were not owned by Americans, those of wealthy Filipinos. This was regarded by the peasants as quite different from what they had expected from the United States after the war. It also contradicted what we were doing in Japan. On the basis of studies (not only on my own but those of a team of specialists which the Department of Agriculture sent over to assist me) it was very, very, clear that the best thing that could be done in the post-war Philippines was to have the Luzon plain continue as a supplier of rice and food for the urban population of that area, and to concentrate the sugar industry in some of the better sugar growing areas such as Negroes down to the south. But the War Damages Act instead was diverted largely to rebuilding the Philippines sugar industry in Luzon. At that time Paul McNutt had become the new Ambassador to the Philippines.

My views intensified by an experience I had on January 1, 1947 when I was visiting one of the old Spanish sugar mills which had not been completely destroyed, Tabacalera Company at Tarlac. During a party on New Year's Eve there was a raid on the village

by the Hakbalahaps. All the lights went out but the party did continue. The next morning early at dawn I set out with the Spanish manager to see what damage had been done in the village below us. We went down the road to look for stragglers abandoned by the guerrillas, who seized some women. But we instead were seized by the Hakbalahaps and had the opportunity to spend the day with them. We had no choice—the rifles were pointed at us. They released us later after taking some of our valuables. During the day it was very interesting to talk to these people. There was a visible communist influence, but most of them were peasants, people who, perhaps, had been guerrillas during the war and didn't want to go back to work. Land reform was very, very, important to them and failure to accomplish this was a principal factor in the Hakbalahap movement. They were well aware that our war damage compensation was going to reconstruct the Philippines for the well-to-do and a sugar industry that truly was not the proper industry for that area. This reinforced my opinion. The kidnaping didn't bother us so much in those days, it was one of the days when you really didn't expect to be assassinated if you were picked up by guerrilla groups. Things changed later. But we were released and this was the only contact that the American Embassy ever had directly with the Hakbalahaps. Nevertheless, the policy had been set in Washington. In Japan we were pursuing a more adequate agricultural policy. We were not able to do it in the Philippines. I was a dissenter and in 1947 I was called into Ambassador McNutt's office, who was very nice about it and said, you know, I'm not saying what you're saying is wrong, but we have a policy in the United States and it is a source of continuing embarrassment to see the type of information which you are providing through your reports and your comments on what we are doing about the agriculture of the Philippines. We would be able to operate better if we had someone who supported our policy as it is and, consequently, I must inform you that I have asked for your transfer. This does not mean that I'm criticizing you. He was a really fine gentleman about it. I did not feel badly but I had expected to stay in the Far East for a considerable time. That was the end of my experiences in the Philippines.

Q: Well I think that the Far East's loss was Latin America's gain and, therefore, the State Department's gain. Thank you very much again, Mr. Ambassador. These have been two very interesting additions to your tape. You've been generous with your time and with your recollection of your illustrious career and I want to thank you for that and I know that a lot of people will be listening to this and reading this in the future and will gain a lot of very good insights into the events with which you were connected.

BOONSTRA: Thank you Mr. Barnes. It's a pleasure that with many of these events you have also been connected and I have always enjoyed your company and your remarks. Most of us in the Foreign Service rarely considered you an interpreter. We considered you one of the better Political Officers.

Q: That's very kind of you. Thank you very much.

End of interview